Application No. 09/585,747
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AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of authenticating a user of a client computer at a server computer executing a distributed application on a plurality of data processing agents, comprising the steps of:

receiving a service request from the user at a first data processing agent;

submitting an authentication request from the first data processing agent to a second data processing agent to authenticate the user;

receiving a response to the authentication request at the first data processing agent from the second data processing agent, wherein, if the user is successfully authenticated, the response includes authentication information that the first data processing agent can use to ~~authenticated~~ subsequently re-authenticate the user ~~service request~~ without submitting a subsequent authentication request to the second data processing agent; and

if the received response indicates that the user is successfully authenticated, providing the requested service to the user.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the received response includes a level of access privileges for the user, and the providing step includes the step of determining the service provided to the user based upon the user's access privilege level.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including the steps of receiving the service request from the user at the first data processing agent included in a first server, and submitting the authentication request from the first data processing agent to the second data processing agent included in a second server.

4. (Currently Amended) A system for authenticating a user of a client computer at a server computer executing a distributed application on a plurality of data processing agents, the system comprising:

a server including a first data processing agent for receiving a service request from the user and a second data processing agent for authenticating the user,

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wherein the first data processing agent is configured to submit an authentication request to the second data processing agent to authenticate the user, and

wherein the second data processing agent is configured to receive the authentication request, attempt to authenticate the user, and transmit a response indicative of whether the user is successfully authenticated to the first data processing agent, wherein, if the user is successfully authenticated, the response includes authentication information that the first data processing agent can use to subsequently re-authenticate ~~a subsequent~~ the user ~~service request~~ without submitting a subsequent authentication request to the second data processing agent.

5. (Currently Amended) A method of authenticating a user of a client computer at a server computer executing a distributed application on a plurality of first data processing agents, comprising the steps of:

receiving a first service request from the user at one of the plurality of first data processing agent;

submitting an authentication request from the one of the plurality of first data processing agent to a second data processing agent to authenticate the user;

authenticating the user at the second data processing agent;

if the user is successfully authenticated, storing a first timeout value indicative of a predetermined first time period on the second data processing agent;

determining whether the predetermined first time period is exceeded;

if the predetermined first time period is exceeded without receiving a second service request from the user, requiring the user to be authenticated at the second data processing agent upon receipt of the second service request; and

if the second service request is received from the user at another of the plurality of first data processing agents before the first time period is exceeded, restarting the first timeout ~~period~~ value.

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6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, further including the steps of receiving the second service request from the user, and determining whether the first predetermined time period is exceeded.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, further including the steps of receiving the second service request from the user at the one of the plurality of first data processing agents, transmitting a message from the one of the plurality of first data processing agents to the second data processing agent including a notification that the second service request is received, receiving the notification at the second data processing agent, and determining whether the predetermined time period is exceeded.

8. (Currently Amended) A system for authenticating a user of a client computer at a server computer executing a distributed application on a plurality of data processing agents, the system comprising:

a server including a plurality of first data processing agents for receiving service requests from the user and a second data processing agent for authenticating the user,

wherein each of the plurality of first data processing agents is configured to submit an authentication request to the second data processing agent to authenticate the user,

wherein the second data processing agent is configured to receive the authentication request, attempt to authenticate the user, store a first timeout value indicative of a first predetermined time period if the user is successfully authenticated, and determine whether the first predetermined time period is exceeded,

wherein each of the plurality of first data processing agents is further configured to notify the second data processing agent if a second service request is received from the user, and the second data processing agent is configured to restart the first timeout ~~period~~ value in response to receiving the notification after receiving a previous notification, relative to the user, from another one of the first data processing agents,

wherein each of the plurality of first data processing agents is further configured to require the user to be re-authenticated at the second data processing agent upon receipt of a second service

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request if the first predetermined time period is exceeded before the second service request is received.

9-11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving the response to the authentication request at the first data processing agent includes receiving authentication information that includes a user name and a password associated with the user.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

storing the received authentication information on the first data processing agent;

receiving a second service request from the user at the first data processing agent; and

using the stored authentication information to authenticate the user without submitting a subsequent authentication request to the second data processing agent.

14. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 4, wherein the authentication information includes a user name and a password associated with the user.

15. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 4, wherein the first data processing agent is further configured to:

store the received authentication information; and

use the stored authentication information to authenticate the user in response to receiving a second service request from the user without submitting a subsequent authentication request to the second data processing agent.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

receiving the second service request from the user at the other first data processing agent; and

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transmitting a message from the other first data processing agent to the second data processing agent indicating receipt of the second service request from the user; and

wherein the step of resetting the timeout period is responsive to receipt of the message indicating receipt of the second service request from the user.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

if the user is successfully authenticated, storing a second timeout value indicative of a second predetermined time period on at least one of the plurality of first data processing agents; and

if the at least one of the plurality of first data processing agents receives the second service request before the second timeout period is exceeded:

restarting the second timeout period stored on at least the second data processing agent that received the second service request; and

providing the requested service to the user without requiring the user to be authenticated at the second data processing agent upon receipt of the second service request.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17, wherein the second predetermined time period is less than the first predetermined time period.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of inputting the second timeout value from the user.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of inputting the first timeout value from the user.

21. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8, wherein at least one of the plurality of first data processing agents is configured to:

store a second timeout value indicative of a second predetermined time period if the user is successfully authenticated; and

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if the least one of the plurality of first data processing agents receives the second service request before the second predetermined timeout period is exceeded:

restart the second timeout ~~period~~value; and

provide the requested service to the user without requiring the user to be authenticated at the second data processing agent upon receipt of the second service request.

22. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 21, wherein the second predetermined time period is less than the first predetermined time period.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 22, wherein at least one of the plurality of first data processing agents is configured to receive the second timeout value from the user.

24. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 22, wherein the second data processing agent is configured to receive the second timeout value from the user.

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